BUSY DAY FOR LITTLE MOTHERS

ONE SATURDAY'S DOINGS AT HAPPY DAY HOUSE.

What Do You Think of a Sewing Class, a Cooking School and a Rummage Sale All on One Day?—Preparing Little Mothers to Be Big Mothers Sometime.

One Saturday recently was a very busy day for the little mothers. It was busy, too, for the big mothers. There were more things to do between 8 o'clock in the morning and 5 in the afternoon than you could possibly imagine.

What do you think of a sewing class, a cooking school and a rummage sale all in one day? Well, that's what they had. Talk about hustling! It was the real thing.

Happy Day house, at 236 Second avenue, is one of the headquarters of the latter day philanthropy that teaches that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. You know the house has a history as soon as you note the two enormous granite lions that guard its entrance. If you have time to listen while the little mothers are coming from the four points of the East Side you will hear of the doings that took place there when it was the residence of the British Minister. You may hear of the great ball that took place the winter of the first charity ball.

You probably won't have time to listen, for just as you get settled in place a whiff strong and pungent of something assails your olfactories, and your inattention being noted, you are requested to walk out and down the stairs to see with your own unbiased vision that the little mothers are prepared, so far as mere food can do it, against the hours that front them with all sorts of duties to be accomplished.

The roomy kitchen has about the space of two and a half times three flats. In it a row of tiny women, mature in expression and gesture, wait for the hot cocoa and the bread and butter that are always ready at the opening hour of school.

They are not greedy. Perhaps it is training, for when a family consists of ten or twelve naturally the habit of lean living becomes more or less fixed. The cup seldom goes back to be replenished and the one slice of bread is nearly always sufficient, but that they do enjoy.

While you are watching them the little woman with gray hair and pink cheeks who presides explains that the spikes along the backs of the lions outside the front door are not put there to prevent the little mothers from roosting on them, but to curb the wandering propensities of the neighborhood cats and boys. The little mothers look only a little interested at your questions. It is a long time since they thought of climbing dizzy heights.

Those are games fit only for children, and they are grown up, 'way up; some of them have turned 13. Think of that!

The house at 236 Second avenue is the principal home of the little mothers, but besides it there is a branch at 16 Greenwich street, in the Syrian quarter, one near South Ferry, Brooklyn, and a summer home at New Rochelle, and if it were desired to prove that they are as popular an organization as Sorosis, the Eclectic, Barnard, Town and Country, or any other well known club of women, it would be only necessary to state that at this summer home last season 6,200 were entertained, some for the day, others for the week.

"AIN'T THAT LOVELY!"

The initiation fee for membership to the little mothers is merely nominal. The payment perhaps requires a slight sacrifice, but is there anything that you care about in the world that doesn't?

To make a specific question of it: If you were the eldest of a family of eight and were really grown up, say 12 with six months thrown in, wouldn't you consider the time and labor expended in washing your face worth while for such a privilege? Naturally you would.

There is, of course, something else, but all the members agree that this is the principal requirement. In order to be a little mother you must have a big mother who knows and does her duty. There is very little shirking and many a L. M. can prove her right to membership, in addition to the clean face, by birth certificates of five or six younger brothers and sisters.

There is one recently admitted member—oh, and she is proud! Her big mother isn't 38—if you count time by years—but she has ten children already, with an accent on the "already." There never has been a question as to the right of this particular L. M. to belong, even though it did happen that one day she came with a face not quite up to the required mark.

Mrs. Clarence Burns, who is president of the Mothers' Aid Association, had the question put to her plumply and she had to admit that, generally ironclad in regard to rules, there were times when they erred on the side of moderation. Not that it is a matter to treat lightly, but if it should come before the officers in session she is inclined to believe that the ten babies would win out against the forgotten washcloth.

It is nearly seventeen years since a philanthropic minded woman looked out of her drawing room into the little park at Stuyvesant Square and watched with kindly and keen interest a small East Side girl with her heart full of love and her arms of baby brother. It was one of the Indian summer days, and the baby did get so heavy after a while; but whenever the little mother stopped he would insist on moving to watch the sparrows and the trees and the people. The little mother's face got hot and red and fagged, the meagre limbs drooped beneath their burden, but she kept smilingly on.

Having a vivid imagination, the woman onlooker saw thousands of other little mothers tugging fat babies, caring for them at night, dressing them in the morning, burdened before their time with the cares of maternity. She felt that she must do something for these beings, even though they were content with their lot.

So, in a nearby basement on Third avenue the good work began. It was a long time before the little mothers and the big mothers took any interest in it.

The big mothers were busy with their washing and their cleaning and their gossipping, with other matters of like import. The little mothers were too busy dressing and feeding the babies to stop to learn how it should be done.

LITTLE MOTHERS LEARNING TO SEW FOR THEIR FAMILIES.

But the founders of the society were not deterred by this indifference. They persisted and after many movings took possession of the fine old mansion where they are to-day. Already $20,000 has been paid toward its final purchase and there only remains $10,000 to be raised.

A good bit of this money has been earned by the little mothers themselves at the bazaars which are held annually in December at the Waldorf-Astoria. There the dish towels, table mats, outing flannel petticoats, aprons and flatiron holders made during the year are sold, as well as the other articles that are sent in by kindly disposed people.

The real responsibility of the occasion falls on the shoulders that have been bent since their birth to all sorts and kinds of burdens except that of irresponsibility. If you could see Jennie Feinheimer bite her thimble you'd realize that paying off $10,000 isn't so easy as it sounds.

Of course Jennie is new to the work. But her face is so clean that you could see to wash your own in it. She gets it that way by using a bit of hard yellow soap and a piece of rag and rubbing hard. Anybody can do it with a little patience.

She's the oldest of six and is just 8. Otherwise she could not be admitted to membership, for they won't let you in if you are only 7. Severe, but presumably right.

It also seems severe to the casual visitor to learn that if Jennie keeps on biting her thimble after she gets to be a full fledged member in good standing she'll have to pay a cent for damages. This is to prevent her being pauperized.

If they should let her bite it right through and when it was thoroughly bitten simply hand her another, in time she would lose all sense of responsibility, and you know as well as another what happens to you when you've lost that. So there must be something in the system after all.

If a member doesn't bite her thimble or her nails, if she doesn't lose her needle or temper, if she has that lovely yellow soap glaze to her cheeks and has her apron tied with the kind of perky bow in the back that she can flirt till it stands up stiff and straight when she passes Jimmy Maher on the corner then she gets marks.

When she has fifteen marks she gets a pair of stockings, for twenty-five she has her choice of several articles of underwear, necessity supposed to influence her choice; for eighty marks she has dress or shoes. If they should have these handed to them when they needed them the question of pauperization would come up again.

Besides, they would get careless. For do you suppose that Mary Flanagan, whose hair is tied back so tight that she can hardly close her eyes, and who wears four bows on it—two at the ends, one at the end of the path of white and one standing upright over her forehead—would take all that trouble if she wasn't finishing up her eighty marks to get a new ruffled apron? Not a bit of it.

There's an old time riddle that asks "What's most likely to become a woman?" And the answer is "A little girl." Now if you substitute the words "big mother" and "little mother" for "woman" and "girl" you will get some idea why these L. M.'s consider their work so important. They are going to be big mothers some day.

In the little faces is written the determination to make worthy mothers. Just watch them and see.

Josie Goldsmith's twisting her thread as if she was making breakfast rolls and just pushing the result through the needle by main force. This done, she puts a knot on it that will keep it from dragging through her sampler as she hems.

Henriette Tamborina has hunched up her shoulder and is resting her cheek on it as she sews. She doesn't seem to have any bones in her body, and she works easier that way. Try it and see.

Bridgy Murphy is sitting knee up almost on a level with her apron bib and her work pinned down tight. She is perfectly oblivious to everybody in the room. It's do or die with Bridgy.

There is almost perfect silence. Not that it is absolutely enjoined, but how can you work properly if you talk all the time? They like the work, else why should they come, for they don't have to, and last year there were 494 children taught in the sewing class, and from October, 1906, to May, 1907, there were 5,949 sewing lessons given.

The cooking school is one of the recent additions to the curriculum. Here there are long blue aprons provided, and the hair is tucked away under nice little caps like those the men wear who make cakes in the restaurant windows.

After a while they are taught to make cakes that are just like those, not quite so round and brown perhaps, but pretty near, and what do you expect all at once? Human beings don't make browned cakes the first time the batter's taken out of the pan, now do they?

Every little while the cooking class has an outing. They don't go to the park to feed squirrels, for as has been explained they are no longer children, and they see no sense in merely playing for the sake of playing.

No; they go to the butcher and vegetable shops and are taught to pick out joints and sides and roasts and chops; how to tell a chuck steak from a round, a pork chop from a lamb. What do the butchers think of it? You ask some of them along Third avenue and ten chances to one they will say that if "people go on gettin' so knowin' there won't be any business at all over here pretty soon."

Nothing is used in these meals which the children would not be apt to find in their own homes, but it has been learned that extra industry is stimulated by the system of marks. Occasionally there comes to the born cook a desire for some special utensil she has never seen at home.

How she could amuse the four babies by beating eggs with a real egg beater! How fine it would be to cook the oatmeal in a saucepan with a hot water pan beneath so it would not burn. So she earns them by her cleanliness, her skill, her good behavior, and especially for success in not spilling or burning things.

The rummage sale takes place in the afternoon after all the other duties are over. It is attended almost exculsively by the big mothers, for most of the little mothers stay at home with the families of babes and put into practice the lessons they have learned in regard to order, cleanliness and getting supper.

One of the big mothers, who holds a baby in her arms, has a careworn, youthful face, the look that comes with early and unceasing maternity. She takes up a pink silk evening waist and looks at it for a long time. Then she hushes the baby, and turning away selects half a dozen men's neckties and a baby's worsted cap.

There is an iron faced woman, her cheeks corrugated with deep furrows, her gray hair, scant and streaked, coiled in a determined knot. She throws aside a dozen articles and finally selects a straw hat suitable for a girl of 16. It is wide brimmed and has a wreath of primroses about its flat brim and underneath the crown are big choux of ribbon.

"How'd I look in it?" she cackles to her mate.

The mate cackles in response that she looks like a fool.

"You ain't goin' to buy any sich truck, be yer?" she asks.

"Ain't I?" She draws her aside and points to the ribbon rosettes. "Hair ribbons for the chicks and only 10 cents."

A big mother with a little mother in attendance falls by the way. She picks out a pair of red satin slippers, two sizes too small, with very high heels. The little mother a few minutes after gazes sadly at a small linen suit, intended for a boy of 5, and there are tears in her eyes as she puts it back in place.

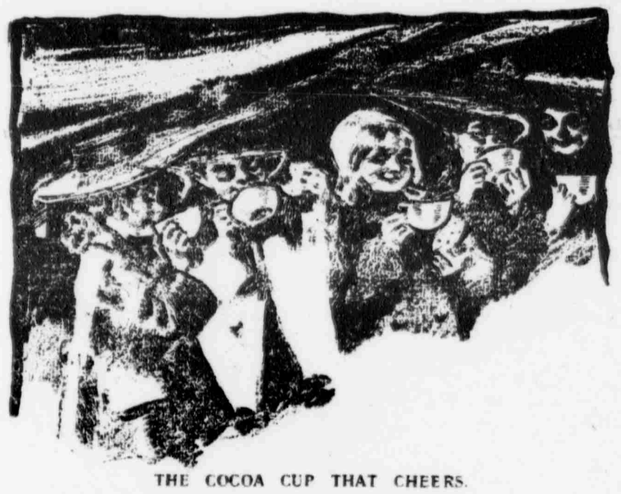
But the majority of the big mothers are practical buyers. They price rolls of cotton cloth with knowing questions. They measure from tip of nose to end of outstretched forefinger. They test linings and comment on frayed seams.

They sniff at the 50 cent gown and say it is only worth 45. They never try anything on. One of the helpers asks a purchaser who has just taken away a skirt "Did it fit?" and the answer is "Oh, it'll fit some of us, sure."

One woman has a bundle so large that she has to go out of the door sideways. She has spent $1.75 and for that has three pairs of shoes, six pairs of stockings, an outside coat, four hats, three pairs of trousers, one nightshirt, some underwear, a man's brown derby hat and two mismated gloves.

THE HEART OF THE BIG MOTHER.

THE ALUMNI.



THE COCOA CUP THAT CHEERS.

SHANDON BELLS AND THE LEE

A ROMANTIC IRISH SPOT AND WHAT A TOURIST FOUND.

The Fishermen and the Swimming Boys of Cork, Both on Dry Land—A New York Skyscraper and the Lakes of Killarney —Happy Faces of the Corkonians.

KILLARNEY, Nov. 5.—They told me that Cork was a very dirty city. They even said it was filthy, and they said it in such a way as to reflect on Irishmen in general and Corkonians in particular.

Yes, they said that Cork was a dirty city, and so I found it—almost as dirty as New York. This may sound like a strong statement, but I mean it.

When I arrived in Cork I saw a hill and made for it at once, because after railway travel there is nothing that so takes the kinks out of a fellow's legs as a walk up a stiff hill. And anyhow, you know, I was on a walking tour.

I arrived at the top about sunset. On reading this sentence over I find that it sounds as if the hill was an all day journey, but it was only a matter of a few squares, and when I started the sun had long since made up its mind to set.

In Ireland the sun takes on Irish ways, and is just a little dilatory. It always means to set, and it always does set in time to avoid being out in the dark, but "it's an unconscionably long time a-dying." At the summit of the hill I saw a church steeple that appealed to my æsthetic sense, and I asked a boy what church it was.

"Shandon Church, sirr," said he with the rapid and undulating utterance of the Corkonian.

"Where the bells are?" said I.

"Yes," said he, smiling. "And over beyont is the Lee."

"The pleasant waters of the River Lee," I quoted at him, and he smiled again. Probably every traveller who goes to Cork quotes the lovely old bit of doggerel, but the Corkonian smiles and smiles.

The River Lee runs through Cork, and at evening it is a favorite place for fishing, also for learning to swim on land.

The fishermen seem to fish for the love of casting, and the little boys swim on the pavement—two pursuits as useless as they are pleasant. Over the bridge the fishermen leaned and cast their lines in anything but pleasant places—for the river is malodorous—and the little boys stood on benches and dived to the pavement, where they spat and then went through the motions of swimming.

There were dozens of the little boys, and most of them seemed to be brothers. Some of them were quite expert in diving backward and all of them were dirty, but they seemed to be happy.

I could not help thinking how soon the Celtic mind begins to use symbols, for it was easy to see that when the boys spat it signified a watering place to them. I dare say they were breaking a city ordinance in spitting, and if they knew that they were that much happier—stolen sweets are always the sweetest.

During the time I watched the setting sun—which was still at it and, by the way, performed some lovely variations on a simple color scheme in the sky—not even an eel was caught; but the fishermen cast under the bridge, let their bait float down the (un)pleasant waters and drew in their lines again and again—mute examples of a patience that one does not associate with Ireland and the Irish.

At last I left them and started out to find Shandon Church, which seemed but a few squares away.

My pathway led through the slums and up a hill so steep that I hope horses only use it as a means of descent. I passed one fireside where the folks looked cosey and happy and warm.

It was a summer evening but chilly, and the place into which I looked was a shop for the sale of coal. Shoemakers' children are generally barefooted, but these people were burning their own coal, and the mother and the dirty children sprawled around the store or home in a shadow casting way that would have delighted Mynheer Rembrandt if he had passed by.

I was struck with the population of Cork. It was most of it on the sidewalk, and nearly all of it was under 16. Pretty faces, too, among them, and happy looking. I think that sympathy would have been wasted on them. They had so much more room than they would have in New York, and they were not any dirtier—than New Yorkers of the same class.

After I had reached the top of the hill I turned and looked for Shandon Church and it was gone. I asked a boy what had become of it and he told me that in following my winding way through the convolutions known as streets I had got as far from the church as I could in the time. He told me pleasantly just how to go to get to the church, and it involved going to the foot of the hill and beginning again.

I asked a number of times after that and always got courteous but rapid answers. The Irish are great talkers, but the Corkonian could handicap himself with a morning's silence and beat his brothers from other counties before evening.

At last I came on the church, passing just before I reached it the Greencoat Hospital National School, with its quaint and curious (to quote three of Poe's words) statues of a green coated boy and girl.

I asked a man when the bells began to ring, for I had been told that they only rang at night.

"Every quar-rter of an hour, sirr; they'll be ringing in a couple of minutes, sirr."

One likes to indulge in a bit of sentiment sometimes, and I stood and waited to hear the bells of Shandon that sound so grand on the pleasant waters of the River Lee. I had left the Lee to the fishermen and the make believe swimmers, but the bells would sound sweetly here under the tower that held them.

A minute passed and then another, and then I heard music—music that called forth old memories of days long since dead. How it pealed out its delight on the (icy) air of night. And how well I knew the tune: "Down Where the Wurzburger Flows."

No, it was not the chimes but a nurse in the hospital at a piano. Before she had finished Shandon bells began, but what they played did not blend with what she sang, and I went on my way thinking on the potency of music.

I passed on down where the River Lee flowed, and the fishermen were still fishing, but the boys had tired of swimming.

Two signs met me at nearly every corner. One read, "James J. Murphy & Co." and the other "Beamish & Crawford" or "Crawford & Beamish," I forget which. Both marked the places of publicans (and sinners, I doubt not) and both were brewers' names. The publican's own name never appeared, but these names were omnipresent.

Again I thought of Shandon bells and the romantic song, "Down Where the Wurzburger Flows," and leaving the Lee still flowing I sought my hotel.

I would like to make a revoluntionary statement that is more often thought than uttered, but before I make it I would like to say that there are two classes of travellers, those who think there is nothing in Europe that compares with similar things in America and those who think there is nothing in America that can hold a candle to similar things in Europe.

I hope I belong to neither class. If I mistake not I am a Pharisee and thank my stars that I am not as other men are. Most of us are Pharisees, but few of us will ever admit it.

I began being a Pharisee when I was a small child, and that is the time that most people begin.

I kept it up. In this I am—like the multitude.

Having thus stated my position, let me go on to say that I am perfectly willing to admit that this or that bit of scenery in France or Switzerland or England or Ireland lays over anything of the sort I ever saw in America, if I think it does, and I am equally willing to say that America has almost unknown bits that are far better than some of the admired and poet ridden places in Europe.

Twin Lakes in Connecticut is one of them and Killarney is a poet ridden place.

Why, even in Ireland there are places just as lovely as Killarney, but they have not been written up and so no one goes to visit them.

I felt that one of the worst things about Killarney was the American sightseer, and I came away soon.

Cook's tourists have never heard of Twin Lakes, thank fortune, and it will be some time before they (the lakes) are spoiled.

The Lakes of Killarney are so beautiful that they are worthy of the pen of a poet, but the pen of a poet does not make any lake more beautiful, and I am quarrelling because so many people refuse to believe the evidence of their own senses and take their natural beauties at the say so of another.

There is a tower going up in New York at present, a tower that, with the exception of the Eiffel Tower, is the tallest on earth.

Many persons look at it, reflect that it is a skyscraper, and then dismiss it as therefore hideous. But it is really very beautiful, and seen from certain vantage points it is architecturally one of the glories of New York.

If it ever gains a reputation for beauty you will find persons raving over it who to-day class it among the "hideous skyscrapers."

A hundred years ago there were some skyscrapers in Switzerland and they were thought to be hideous. After a while a man with a poet's eyes and a courageous tongue visited them and he said "the Alps are beautiful."

When their reputation for beauty was established travellers left the region round about the Rockies to go and rave over the beauties of Switzerland.

That's all.

CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS.

A Famous Gamble.

From the London Chronicle.

Thomas Riley, a Nottingham druggist, who died yesterday, aged 84, was associated with one of the most remarkable events of Nottingham history.

When the rebels at the time of the Bread Riots were marching about the city he tossed the coin which decided whether the parish church or Nottingham Castle should be burnt.

The rioters could not trust any of themselves to spin the coin fairly, so forced Riley, then a boy in the crowd, to toss. The result was in favor of burning the castle, and the castle was accordingly destroyed, one of the rioters being burnt in it. Six men concerned in the affair were afterward tried at Leicester and hanged.